



News & Events

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California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, California

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Cal Poly Engineering Students To Talk Careers Tuesday With Fourth Graders

SAN LUIS OBISPO -- Cal Poly engineering students will visit South County elementary schools Tuesday (Feb. 24) with the aim of inspiring a new generation of youngsters to consider careers in engineering.

Twenty or more university student volunteers will present hands-on engineering activities to fourth graders at Grover Beach and Shell Beach elementary schools as part of National Engineers Week outreach efforts. The "Fourth Grade Day" was organized by the Cal Poly Society of Women Engineers (SWE).

Marlie Schmidt, a former fourth-grade teacher at Pacheco Elementary School in San Luis Obispo, who has had the SWE volunteers in her classroom in past years, is enthusiastic about the outreach program.

"Our students loved every minute of the activity," Schmidt said, "and the Cal Poly students were wonderful, both in teaching engineering concepts and in explaining their various majors. The program definitely helps plant a seed about career and college opportunities. Many of our students don't get that exposure at home."

"Our mission is to open the doors of the profession to young people," said Kristen Lease, co-coordinator of the event, "especially at a time when there's a shortage of engineers and enrollment is down at most engineering colleges across the country."

"Personally, I'm involved because it's really fun to work with the kids and see them become so excited by having a firsthand experience with engineering design," Lease said. "We hope we'll have a long-term impact by enabling these girls and boys to envision themselves as engineers and computer scientists."

The student engineers will make presentations to two classes at Grover Beach Elementary School in the morning and to two classes at Shell Beach Elementary School in the afternoon.

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